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S E C R E T VIENNA 000037

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NP/ECNP - PARSON AND EUR/AGS - VIKMANIS-KELLER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/07/2015

TAGS: [ETTC](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [IR](#) [AU](#)

SUBJECT: AUSTRIAN EXPORT OF SNIPER RIFLES TO IRAN --
AMBASSADOR HIGHLIGHTS RETRANSFER CONCERNS

REF: A. (A) ZARZECKI-PHILLIPS E-MAIL 1/5/05

[B.](#) (B) 04 STATE 272249

[C.](#) (C) 04 VIENNA 4393

[D.](#) (D) 04 STATE 263141

[E.](#) (E) 04 VIENNA 4354

Classified By: AMBASSADOR W.L. LYONS BROWN. REASONS: 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[1.](#) (S) Summary: The Ambassador raised the transfer of Steyr-Mannlicher sniper rifles to Iran with Foreign Ministry Secretary General (Deputy Secretary equivalent) Johannes

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Kyrle on January 7. Kyrle stressed that the Foreign Ministry had verified the end-user as an Iranian government entity, and had required a written end-use certificate. The Ambassador outlined information about the other Iranian military equipment which has ended up in Iraq. The Ambassador asked for a halt to further shipments; for Austria to enforce the end-use certification; and for Austria to provide us with the serial numbers of the weapons shipped. Kyrle undertook to consult with the Foreign Minister and with Interior Ministry officials. End summary.

[2.](#) (S) The Ambassador stressed our concerns that these weapons would end up in the hands of insurgents in Iraq, putting our forces, and those of coalition countries, at great risk. The Ambassador said we found the purpose the Iranians had given for the purchase -- counter narcotics and border control -- to be questionable, and the number of weapons -- 2,400 -- to seem excessive for any law enforcement purposes.

[3.](#) (S) Kyrle said the Foreign Ministry had been diligent in checking the Iranian request. The Austrian Embassy in Tehran, he said, had verified that the end-user was an Iranian government entity, he said. Iran was extremely concerned about drug flows across its border with Afghanistan, and both the EU and the U.S. were engaged in counter-narcotics programs on the Afghan side of the border. Kyrle stressed that Austria had demanded precise, written end-use certifications from the Iranians, and the Iranians had provided the necessary documents.

[4.](#) (S) Drawing on the information provided ref (a), the Ambassador outlined evidence that insurgents in Iraq had recently obtained Iranian-origin military equipment. Kyrle acknowledged that this constituted "proof that weapons in Iraq had come from Iran," whether from government sources, the black market, or any other mechanism.

[5.](#) (S) The Ambassador asked Kyrle for three things: first, to stop any further shipments of these weapons to Iran; second, to follow up Iran's end-use certification (since, as the Ambassador said, the fact that the Iranians had signed a piece of paper did not guarantee anything); and third, to provide us with the serial numbers of the shipped weapons, so we can know immediately where they came from if we found any in Iraq.

[6.](#) (S) Kyrle asked if the United States were making similar presentations elsewhere in Europe. After all, he said, other arms manufacturers had commercial relations with Iran. The Ambassador said that we were pursuing the same general policy, but the reason we were engaged in this matter in Austria was because there was an ongoing sale involving military weapons from Austria. Kyrle noted that many arms manufacturers had licensing agreements with countries elsewhere in the world, making it difficult to enforce strict controls. (Note: we understand that Steyr-Mannlicher has such a licensing agreement with Malaysia. End note.) The Ambassador said these were also of concern, and we would respond similarly to transfers such as the current Austrian one.

[7.](#) (SBU) Kyrle undertook to convey the Ambassador's points to Foreign Minister Plassnik (who was departing shortly for an EU meeting on the Asian tsunami), as well as to the relevant officials in the Interior Ministry. The Ambassador told Kyrle that he would raise this issue in his introductory meeting with new Interior Minister Liese Prokop. Brown